



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

## *Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs*

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### Patrick Administration Proposes Designation of Vessel No Discharge Area for Coastal Waters of Cohasset, Marshfield, and Scituate

*Ban on dumping boat sewage would also cover  
North and South Rivers and adjacent waters*

BOSTON – Boats would be prohibited from discharging all sewage – including treated waste – off the coast of the Upper South Shore under a proposal the Patrick Administration has submitted to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Ian Bowles announced today.

EEA, through its Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), recommended that the EPA approve designation of the coastal waters of Scituate, Marshfield, and Cohasset as a vessel No Discharge Area. The proposed ban on discharge of all boat sewage would also apply in the North and South Rivers and adjacent coastal waters.

If approved by the EPA, this would be the Commonwealth's ninth No Discharge Area (NDA). NDAs already protect the coastal waters of Plymouth, Kingston, Duxbury, and Harwich; Buzzards Bay; Waquoit Bay in Falmouth; Three Bays/Centerville Harbor in Barnstable; Chatham's Stage Harbor; Wellfleet Harbor; and coastal waters of Nantucket from Muskeget Island to Great Point.

"Our nomination of the coastal waters of the Upper South Shore as a No Discharge Area is another example of strong state, regional, and local commitments to improving water quality and protecting valuable coastal resources," Secretary Bowles said. "Governor Patrick's goal is ultimately to make all of the Commonwealth's coastal waters No Discharge Areas, and this is a big step toward that goal."

At 54 square miles, the new NDA would be the third largest in the Commonwealth, encompassing two National Natural Landmarks (North and South Rivers) and covering an area that supports nearly 3,000 commercial and recreational boats. Scituate, Cohasset, Marshfield and

towns along the North River – including Norwell, Hanover, and Pembroke – sustain a variety of water-related activities including lobster harvesting, fishing and shell-fishing, tourism, boating, sailing, and kayaking. The North River is one of only five state-designated “Scenic and Recreational Rivers.”

“The proposed NDA will provide additional protection to a region that prizes its coastal character and resources. These include significant shell-fishing areas, eelgrass beds, anadromous fish runs, and over a dozen coastal recreational beaches,” CZM Director Leslie-Ann McGee said.

NDAs protect water quality and aquatic life from pathogens, nutrients, and chemical products contained in discharged sewage, and also reduce the risk of human illness, making it safer to swim, boat, fish, and eat shellfish from protected waters. NDAs can also impede the growth of harmful algae that occurs due to high nutrient levels in sewage discharge.

Under the Clean Water Act, a body of water can be designated an NDA if local, state, and federal authorities determine that the area is ecologically and recreationally important enough to merit protection above and beyond that provided by existing state and federal laws. In Massachusetts, EEA’s CZM office works closely with communities and the EPA to establish NDAs as part of a comprehensive regional pollution abatement approach that includes wastewater management through local sewerage initiatives, stormwater mitigation, and low impact development strategies.

Related efforts to authorize NDAs are currently under way for Salem Sound, Cape Cod Bay, and Boston Harbor. EEA published a notice on the Salem Sound NDA in the March 26 Environmental Monitor, opening a 21-day public comment period on that proposal.

"This protection will improve Pembroke's water quality, which is not only essential to our health and well-being, but is also a critical piece of our local economy," said Senate President Therese Murray. "Both the residents and visitors to Pembroke will benefit from this designation by being able to utilize waterways that are free from discharge."

Added, Senator Robert Creedon, “We are pleased both state and federal governments are taking joint action to clean up the waterways of the Commonwealth.”

“It makes complete sense to ban discharge of effluent from the waters in which we swim, boat and fish,” Senator Robert Hedlund said.

"Thank you to Scituate and Marshfield town officials, in particular our Harbormasters and Waterways Committee officials, for their strong advocacy in seeking to establish a No Discharge Area designation for six coastal communities," Rep. Frank Hynes said. "As a result of officials' hard work, with technical assistance and coordination by Coastal Zone Management staff, two additional boat sewage pumping facilities will be available for boaters in Cohasset, Scituate, Marshfield, Norwell, Hanover, and Pembroke. This new NDA will assist in the protection and enhancement of our coastal waters and will further protect public health, water quality, and the marine environment."

“It is of utmost importance that we make every effort to keep our oceans as clean as possible,” said Representative Garrett J. Bradley. “Designating no discharge areas will help to ensure that

the waters can be enjoyed by members of the community for many years to come. I appreciate all the efforts of the Office of Coastal Zone Management to protect our vital natural resources.”

“Our Harbor is probably the most cherished vista in Cohasset and plays a vital role in the economic and recreational aspects of the community. In addition to supporting a working lobster fleet, its waters and surroundings are enjoyed by many in the community for swimming and boating.” said Karen Quigley, Chair of the Cohasset Harbor Health Committee. “The NDA nomination enjoys wide support in the community and is an important part of a larger, overall plan the town is working on to preserve and improve the quality of the Harbor’s waters.”

Scituate Harbormaster Mark Patterson added, “The NDA designation is an opportunity to protect our waters and to raise awareness about the importance of stewardship. The fact that we are joined in the application by the towns of Marshfield and Cohasset is a testament to the importance of protecting our coastal waters on a regional level.”

“The North and South Rivers Watershed Association (NSRWA) has been advocating for an NDA for many years,” said Samantha Woods, NSRWA Executive Director. “The water quality improvements that will result from the NDA could potentially help with opening shellfish beds in the South River, a goal of the NSRWA, as well as improve water quality in general.”

For more information on No Discharge Areas in New England please visit:

<http://mass.gov/czm/nda.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/region01/eco/nodiscrg/index.html>.

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